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ABSTRACT

This essay suggests a new method of educating graduate students in communication. Students follow a prescribed program of courses and experience leading to the particular career they have chosen. Mastery of each stage must be demonstrated before a student goes to the next. Among the methods used are participation in task forces dealing with a problem, tests monitored by computer, and field work. As a student advances, the amount he owes the state for his education decreases. This system depends on several assumptions: 1) toleration of overt modification of people's behavior; 2) belief that extrinsic controls of behavior are better than intrinsic controls, and 3) behavioral specificity must be understandable by both the learning-manager and the student-learner, worthy of being learned, and valid. Implications of this sytem include: 1) shift of communication from a "field" to a "discipline"; 2) revolutionary changes in instruction strategies; 3) need for taxonomies of communication careers; 4) inadequacy of today's methods of training, and 5) new means of financing graduate education. (JK)

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GRADUATE EDUCATION IN 1984 OR 1984 OR BYE, BYE AMERICAN PIE?

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What will graduate education in communication be like in 1984: Will it be just another year? Will the dark clouds of Orwell shade the sky? Or will there be an American pie? The purpose of this paper is to (1) describe our interpretation of the graduate education of a student-learner, Winston Smith, in 1984, (2) predict what can be improved and accomplished by the new system, and (3) discuss the assumptions and implications derived from the description. In essence, the article deals with the issue of moving toward more specificity of behaviors for differential classes of occupations and modification of graduate students' behavior to meet those specifications in education of the future.

Winston Smith and P. U. 3128

Winston in his quest for graduate education has decided upon a career-occupation in International Relations Communication Pathology. He sends a computerique to the Midwest Central Computer Analysis Center. They respond to his request by listing three public universities which meet his criterion of a Class 5 in International Relations Communication Pathology. After videophoning all three, he decides upon Public University 3128 in New York City. To illustrate how graduate education in communication might be like in the not-too-distant future, a glimpse of Winston during his introductory conference with the Controller of the Communication Department, followed by a glimpse of one of his "typical" classes and his internship is appropriate.

The controller having referred to Winston's letter of introduction and the transcription of the videophone conference makes the following points in his discussion with Winston: "As you already know Winston, P. U. 3128 operates on a behavioral-module system, wherein you choose what occupation you want to train for, and then we determine how this training should come about. Now you already have chosen IRCP as your goal, and when you check the State Professional Chart to your right (See the

"Taxonomy of Communication-Related Careers") you'll see that this is a Class 5 position, meaning that your prescribed program includes requisites of the other four classes, plus those specific to your area.

"Now, allow me to explain how P. U. 3128 operates to maximize student-learners' mastery performance. From past experience, we have found that student-learners[1] work best under a contigency system. To demonstrate mastery of your objectives, you have the option, for example, to receive either reimbursement for book costs or a proportionate remittance of tuition through our voucher system. Students at or above the Class 3 have two additional options. Since it is felt by the Department, the Public University System, and the Discipline that the dissemination of new information and research should be encouraged, students who make contributions through publication have a choice of receiving academic credit for their research, or release-time from a predetermined portion of their assistantship duties without loss of stipend. Moreover, Class 3 or higher graduate students also have open to them the option of studying free of charge at other universities for special training or interests as reinforcement for achieving certain high level behaviors. We also consider graduate students not as bodies in the pre-1980 sense, but as pre-professionals. Therefore, when you obtain your Class 3, you'll share with three other grads a full-time secretary. Good secretaries are indispensable, by the way Winston; be sure you respect him or her, as the case may be. Of course, we're not in the business of training secretaries, but communicologists; thus, we don't feel you should be spending your time doing secretarial tasks for which you are not qualified.

"Now, Winston, there's just one more point. The Central Graduate Council in Washington has determined the cost of your Class 5 in IRCP to be $32,187. We consider this, frankly, to be a high price to pay for graduate students. However, since we feel that excellence in scholarship should be reinforced, half of this cost will be paid by the University <u>if</u> you obtain your Class 5. In the event that you choose

TAXONOMY OF COMMUNICATION-RELATED CAREERS

	EDUCATION	BUSINESS	SOCIAL-POLITICAL
Class 1	Instructional Assistant in Communication Audio-Visual Technician	Writer for the media, radio television, newspapers Union Representative Salesman	Government Spokesman Military Attache
Class 2	Film Production Speech-writer Forensics Coordinator	Public Relation Proposal Specialist Speech-writer Audio-Visual Specialist	Speech-writer Political Communication Specialist
Class 3	Secondary Education Learning Manager Language specialist for Elementary Schools (verbal enrichment)	Media Broadcaster Organizational Specialist Corporation Communication Mediation-Arbitration Specialist Advertising Personnel	News Correspondent
Class 4	Junior College Learning Manager in Applied and Performance Communication Inter-Organizational Specialist	Public Relations Communication Specialist Intra-Community Relations Transracial Communication Specialist Inter-Organizational Specialist	Audience Analyst Consumer Affairs Campaign Organizer Inter-Organizational Specialist
Class 5	Instructional Development for Colleges and University University Learning Manager Undergraduate-Graduate Advisor Journal Editor Research Center Director	Advisor to Special Committees Consultant to Broadcasting Director of Publicity and Information Dissemination	International Relations Communication Pathology Press Secretary

the remission system of reinforcement; that is, being paid for performing at high levels of behavior, we will pay proportionate amounts of what you owe to the State. However, if you do not master behaviors for a Class 5, you will owe the State for the cost of the highest class you have obtained. Your desire to obtain a Class 5 should be formally re-iterated to me every six months so both you and the department will know what your current intentions are.

"Winston, there's no need to get nervous about our system, most students have so excelled that only a few have had more than two or three thousand dollars to pay."

With these assurances, Winston begins his graduate program which includes Com 144, "Contemporary Human Communication." The class, in its fourth session, has already mastered material to criterion in intravidual and intervidual communication. This week's concentration is nonverbal communication, and the class, having analyzed prescribed research readings, is attempting to see if the research actually applies to real-life situations. Under the guidance of a group facilitator (a student-learner with a Class 2 or higher who has already mastered this course to criterion), the group is conducting a nonverbal content analysis of the interaction patterns of the Department of Communication's secretarial and technical staff.

Since the unit of learning in nonverbal behavior has been chosen by the group for their task-force project, their analysis in its final form will be presented to the secretaries and technicians of the department with recommendations for each on how to enhance his nonverbal communication. In the event that post analyses reveal significant improvement, the student-learners involved in the task-force will receive reinforcement of their choosing. While this task-force will continue for the remainder of the sexmester, today is the last class allotment for nonverbal behavior, and students who did not master the unit pretest (which allows them to bypass a particular area of study) are taking the

unit test. This form requires recognition, analysis and application of nonverbal laws of behavior. Every student receives immediate feedback on his test performance and a computer elaboration of incorrect test items which explains (1) why the alternative the individual chose was incorrect, (2) why the correct answer is the best alternative and suggests (3) further reading material and tasks for meeting criterion on the next evaluation.

Winston who has had a rough week and is still adjusting to his new graduate school fails to master the unit by three checkpoints. But he is not distressed, for he can now study his computer analysis, seek elaboration on any of the items he missed (although this will probably not be necessary), and then demonstrate mastery of the unit on a different evaluation form. Although student-learners cannot continue in the course until they have mastered the previous units to 100% criterion, it is rare that any student, having the computer analysis-elaboration of previous errors, takes a test[2] more than two times. Winston is a prime example of this, for he has just taken Form 2 of the evaluation and the computer print-out reads: "100%--good job."

Eighteen months later (1986), having received a final "100%--good job" rating plus quite a few vouchers for tuition remission in such learning experiences as "International Conflict Resolution, International Communication, Communication Pathology in International Communication, and Research Methods in International Communication," Winston has met the behaviors for a Class 4 and is beginning his internship in his area of speciality. His selection of New York City for graduate study has been fortunate, since it is still the hub of international affairs. Just as in his previous course-work, Winston predetermines with his Head Planner (what was in pre-1980, a "Major Professor") what specific behaviors he wants to possess at the conclusion of internship, and how he will be evaluated for his performance. The following decision is agreed upon and contracted: Winston will be

an assistant-mediator in the Nigerian-Australian talks on immigration regulations which have been deadlocked for eight weeks at the CURES Assembly.[3] It is Winston's task to apply his mastery of communication principles to this situation, and effect settlement or, at least, progression in the talks. Mastery of this objective will be measured by the criterion of reports of improvement by each side in the conflict.

Breaking down his task, Winston spends two weeks in residence at each of the embassies. During this time, he keeps a daily journal and quantified record of the embassies' verbal and nonverbal communications regarding their own viewpoints on the immigration issue. This record is validated by the Head Planner who interviews representatives of both embassies at the end of Winston's two-week residence at each embassy.

The fifth week of the sexmester finds Winston making a behavioral analysis of his records and planning communication strategies for his next assignment as assistant mediator in the CURES talks. For the next three weeks, Winston attends each session of the talks, and following the day's activities, he meets with each side separately and gives his analysis of the proceedings, the communication dysfunctions evidenced by each party, and suggestions for their communication behavior the following day. Regular meetings are also scheduled with interns from other departments who are working on the same problem (International Relations, Political Science, Social Psychology, etc.) During his residence, Winston also keeps a self-report by completing a preset form on his own communication behaviors. For these two weeks, Winston also makes a weekly progress report to the Head Planner as to whether the parties have corrected their communication problems. These reports are in the form of success percentages; i.e., attempts to communicate over opportunities and success over attempts. Just as Winston received immediate feedback in his classes,

his clients receive feedback as immediately as possible. At the end of the sexmester, the Australian-Nigerian conflict is not completely resolved, but significant breakthroughs have been made, and an agreement is anticipated in a few weeks by the Nigerians who have made some concessions to admit Australians in somewhat less limited numbers.

Winston has no more to do for his Class 5 in International Relations Communication Pathology than to pay the $1507 he still owes the State for his education and to fill out the completion of objectives form for Public University No. 3128.

Some Crucial Assumptions

Whenever a utopia is described, whether negative or positive, the value of the description depends, in large part, upon the reader being aware of the assumptions that underlie the "prediction". First among these assumptions is presuming that Winston's world could in fact take place. It is assumed that there will be a 1984. Not to be taken adventiously, this statement declares the socio-political system of the future must tolerate flagrant, over-powering modification of people's behavior. Nineteen seventy-two certainly looks askance at any attempt to direct overtly people's behavior, particularly when it encroaches upon intimate, personal affairs. On the other hand, 1984 might not be so different. With newly authorized wiretaps, reporters being forced to testify by the FBI before subcommittees, and new developments in computerized information and retrieval systems, the reality of 1972 is not too much different from the fantasy of 1984.

A second assumption presumes that extrinsic is superior to intrinsic controls of individual behavior. The essence of the difference between the two systems is that with the new method, the learning manager actually controls the reinforcement schedules. In contrast, the old (present) system emphasizes the individual providing his own reinforcement in the form of altruism, self-gratification, a healthy ego, or other intrapersonally-oriented contingencies. The 1984, Skinnerian system of human engineering, thus, calls for overt manipulation of the individual's behavior through "extra-intrapersonal" contingencies.

It is not to be inferred, however, that behavioral reinforcement does not have any effect upon intrapersonal contingencies (attitudes, opinions, values, and beliefs). Research in persuasive techniques[4] shows clearly that when behavior is discrepant from attitudes, the individual can, as one alternative, restore cognitive congruity by changing his attitude to fit the behavior. In sum, behavioral modification also affects attitude. Consequently, when overt contingencies cease, the intrapersonal contingencies continue to reinforce the desired behaviors for the future.

The discussion thus far has not meant to imply that individuals in 1984 will have less freedom. In many ways, the individual will have more freedom. For example, he will have greater freedom of choice with a clear taxonomy of the employment career opportunities for communicologists. In reality, then, this system provides the individual with freedom at the highest level, i.e., he chooses his career goals. In addition, the system provides the most efficient means by which to obtain his goals, thus alleviating problems of the currently prevalent trial and error system.

In order for the 1984 system to work as described earlier, it was assumed, thirdly, that behavioral specificity must be (1) understandable by both the learning manager and the student-learner; (2) worthy of being learned, i.e., one should not expect student-learners to modify their behavior unless given a viable rationale for why they should do so; and (3) valid as measured by the correspondence between employment-career behaviors and student-learned behaviors. Current failures abound which clearly indicate student confusion as to what the teacher seeks behaviorally, and students, correspondingly, perform poorly. As far as 1972 is concerned, instructional development in communication must now turn toward taxonomic reclassification of exactly what a major in communication entails for the student who desires to be a scholar-teacher in communication, as well as for the student who plans a communication-related career. In addition to this taxonomy[5] incorporating behavioral objectives that are understandable, worthwhile, and valid, this taxonomy must also provide relevant contingencies for meeting those behavioral objectives. If these contingencies are not developed, the trend as outlined above will not manifest itself until considerably after 1984.

Implications of the 1984 System

Just as the value of any utopian community description is dependent upon understanding its assumptions, so also must its implications be discussed and analyzed. Although Winston Smith's utopia in "1984, 1984, or Bye, Bye American Pie?" will undoubtedly never come true in all respects,

there are, nevertheless, five major implications of the behavioral modification of 1984 that warrant discussion in 1972.

First among these implications is the need for a major shift of communication from the status of a "field" to that of a "discipline." Anatol Rapaport lists these criteria for a discipline:

> A field in order to be a discipline must have constraint. Discipline is essential for any organized activity. And so in academic disciplines, "discipline" means constraint on the mode of thought. It prescribes the repetoire of concepts, the patterns of classification, the rules of evidence, and the etiquette of discourse ...it must also make assertions about the observable world...[6]

Unless the communication field strives toward meeting these criteria, it cannot expect to gain academic or real-world status. When so many of the world's problems are problems of communication, it is indeed embarrassing that the field has no solutions. People with communication problems turn to psychiatrists, psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, public relations, ad nauseum--not to our field.

The second major implication entails the revolutionary changes in learning and instructional strategems. Of prime importance is the change toward clear, behavioral specification of objectives. These objectives must be stated behaviorally in order that the student-learners and learning managers alike know exactly (i.e., behaviorally) what is expected of them. Not only do behaviorally stated objectives aid the student-learner by reducing the confusion and uncertainty, but they also make the planning of learning strategies more efficient and relevant to the specified behavioral objectives. Moreover, empirical research has shown that the statement of behavioral objectives not only increases cognitive learning, but improves affective behaviors as well.[7]

Because adult human behavior is best modified by contingencies which are overt and relevant to the behavioral demands of the individual's value system, the learning system of the future will have a variety of

contingencies from which the student-learner can choose. For example, Winston might choose tuition remission over release-time from assistantship duties because this choice is more relevant to his life-style. Since research has shown that positive reinforcement in most learning environments is more efficient in terms of time, quantity of information processed, and behaviors acquired, the learning system of the future will emphasize rewards rather than punishment as contingencies for behavior.

Another change expected by 1984 concerns the evaluation of student-learner behaviors. This evaluation process will be less oriented toward the multiple-guess approach of testing today. For example, student-learners might be required to analyze a taped sequence of a city commission meeting which has been previously reviewed by the learning manager(s). Certain behaviors exhibited in the tape would be identified, synthesized, and corrected, if problems were identified by the student-learners. These evaluations will also have 100% mastery as criterion. This feature is stressed for the same reason that doctors and lawyers have high levels of criteria for mastery: the decisions they make affect the lives and property of many people. In a similar manner, a consultant in trans-ethnic or international communication pathologies, for example, would also have serious impact upon peoples' lives and property. A criterion of 100% will be the usual, not the exception in the 1984 system. Moreover, the 100% level of criterion will be used at all levels, not just the "Class 5" level of learning. Pre-requisite information is considered just as important, for it serves as the foundation for future information accrual and behavior acquisition.

With the new technology of 1984 (not to say that 1972 does not have a good start in this direction), immediate feedback will improve cognition and behavior acquisition by providing recency of reinforcement. Such recency imprints the learner much more efficiently in terms of retention and speed of learning. Moreover, the efficiency of the total learning process will be vastly improved, providing of course, such feedback is appropriate to the pre-determined behavioral objectives.

Learning systems will be affected not only by the above changes, but also by current trends which indicate that internship programs will be more prevalent in the future. The successful completion of these internships will serve as criteria for degrees and class ratings. For example, a criterion for obtaining a "Class 5" in international relations communication pathology might be such a program as Winston's. A predetermined time of successful experience in one's chosen area may serve as a prerequisite criterion for a degree being granted. Such programs alleviate problems currently of the college graduate who asks, "What's the relevance of all I've learned?" Also, internships assist the college graduate who "knows a lot" but has no opportunity to apply his new knowledge in a real-world situation.

The third major implication, that a crucial need exists for a taxonomy of communication careers, can be derived from the previous implications. Unless such a taxonomy is created, no answer to the question, "Okay, I've got a degree in communication--what can I do with it besides teach?" can be provided. Until the field can answer positively that communication has something to offer besides how to write a newspaper article, give a speech or make a film, it cannot expect to gain the status of a "discipline." Moreover, if all a field can do is teach the field to others, to teach the field to others, ad nauseum, that field has nothing to offer.

Admittedly, it is easy to criticize--but what can be done to improve the situation? Four recommendations are in order: (1) Clarify specific careers in which communication majors are especially qualified; (2) Use teaching to interface behaviors learned (institutionally accrued) with behaviors required (those specified by real-world career requirements) by following the principle of correspondent validity; (3) Inform potential employers of the specific advantages a communication major has to offer; and (4) Ensure that Communication does in fact have "something to offer."

Implication four--what does 1984 have in store for communicologists training today and those trained even earlier? For one thing, current methodologies in education will not suffice for learning in 1984. Individuals expecting to be held accountable for student behavior should (1) be familiar

with human behavior engineering, (2) be willing to adopt new educational methodologies, and (3) be able to master this educational methodology so they can adequately function in 1984. In reference to 1984 and to this implication, it should be noted that learning managers, just as student-learners, will have specific objectives and pre-determined contingencies. No reinforcement will be granted until the required behaviors are manifested.

A fifth implication deals with the current, practical realities of graduate institution finance. The "Public University System" of 1984 will come to fruition because of the current trend among legislators and the voting public who are tired of the high price of graduate education. Legislators are asking, "Why should we educate out-of-state students who will only leave our state after exploiting our educational institutions?" Consequently, many state universities are increasing their out-of-state tuition to the extent that a number of their universities are losing the stimulating and multiple-dimensioned atmosphere of the University. Even at present, graduate students are being pressed to pay more and more of the cost of their education. For example, the legislatures of Florida and Ohio have bills pending for a graduate student paying as much as $30,000 for his education over a period of years after graduation. The only answer to decreasing state support, especially in light of decreasing popular support, is a federally sponsored system of graduate education. Here, the revenue collected from the nation benefits all, and the University is more free from the irrational state legislator. In essence what is needed is a revenue sharing plan specifically designed for funding graduate education. Moreover, this federal system would eliminate proximity and cost as criteria for selection of graduate schools, and stress the more relevant criteria of the individual's career needs and preferences.

Summary

This sneak preview of graduate study in 1984 has given a glimpse into the world of Winston Smith. With videophones, computeriques, the CURES talks, 100% mastery, $30,000 graduate programs, Class Five designations, and human engineering, the world of Winston Smith encompasses several assumptions and implications which warranted discussion. The description assumed that 1984 could in fact take place, extrinsic modification is superior to intrinsic modification of behavior, and behavioral objectives must be understandable, worthwhile, and valid. Discussion was also warranted by the implications of the 1984 model. These include the need for a major shift from the status of a field to that of a discipline, the revolutionary changes in learning and instructional strategems, the need for a taxonomy of communication careers, the implications for communicologists trained today and yesterday, and the practical realities of graduate institution finance. The value of this preview, thus, lies in the implications it has for graduate education and in the overt behavior it must stimulate in preparing for 1984.

Footnotes:

[1]One may be a student and not a learner and vice-versus. The implication here is that students in this educational system are learners, not just formally enrolled bodies.

[2]"Test" in these cases should not be interpreted to mean a 20-item multiple-guess form over recall information. A typical "test" would be to analyze a video-taped, actual interaction of a town meeting, for example, by preset criteria.

[3]China, United State of America, Russia, European Peoples Republic and Swahlili Republic of Africa.

[4]Simons, H. W. Persuasion and Attitude Change, in L.L. Barker and R. J. Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: 1971, pp. 227-248.

[5]For a good start toward the goal of providing such a taxonomy, see R. J. Kibler, L. L. Barker, and D. T. Miles, Behavioral Objectives and Instruction, Boston: 1970.

[6]Rapaport, A. "The Various Meanings of Theory," American Political Science Review, LII (1958), pp. 972-973.

[7]Kibler, R. J., Barker, L. L., and Cegala, D. J., "A Rationale for Using Behavioral Objectives in Speech-Communication Instruction," The Speech Teacher, XIX (1970), pp. 245-256.